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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/825,230

04/16/2004

Les Gaston

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KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP
2040 Main Street, 14th Floor
Irvine, CA 92614

EXAMINER

BHAT, NINA NMN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1764

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

01/26/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/825,230

Applicant(s)

GASTON ET AL.

Examiner

N. Bhat

Art Unit

1764

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-24 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 April 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Applicant's election without traverse of Group I, claims 1-13, drawn to the apparatus in the reply filed on October 31, 2006 is acknowledged. The examiner acknowledges that applicant has amended claim 14 to depend from claim 1 and requested rejoinder of the process claims. Applicant is reminded that rejoinder is applicable when an allowable product has been found and the non-elected group directed to a process of making the allowable product or process of using the allowable product has been claimed. In the instant case, the elected invention is directed to an allowable apparatus and even though applicant has included the limitations of the apparatus of claim 1 into the process, it is maintained that the apparatus as claimed can be used in order to practice a different process and therefore a separate and distinct invention. The restriction requirement is hereby made FINAL.

2. Action on the merits of claims 1-13 follows:

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Opoku USP 3,998,702.

Opoku teaches an apparatus which treats bitumen froth which includes a source of steam corresponding to Opoku element 14 Figure 1, 30 in Figure 2, specifically element 34 injection means which includes plurality of opening or nozzles

Art Unit: 1764

37); baffles disposed in a elongate static mixer body which correspond to Opoku section 30, baffles are elements 36 or 37. The conduit (30 or 14) is disposed an angle from the horizontal axis normally in the range of 5° to 45°. The baffles as claimed can be of various size and shape.[Note Column 3, lines 35-66 and Figures 1 and 2] The baffles as constructed and arranged is capable of imparting a later, radial, tangential or circumferential directional component to a material flowing through the static mixer. Opoku teaches that the quantity and volume of steam added to the conduit are regulated to provide the maximum efficiency in heating and deaerating the froth.[Note Column 4, lines 3-6]

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

7. Claims 4-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Opoku et al.

Art Unit: 1764

Opuku et al. teach the invention substantially as claimed. Opuku et al. teach an apparatus which heats a bitumen froth which includes a source of steam and inclined body which includes a bitumen inlet, outlet, steam injection means and baffle means disposed within the inclined body which functions as static mixers disposed within the inclined body to mix the bitumen froth as it travels through the inclined body.[Note Column 3, lines 35-66 and Figures 1 and 2]

However, Opuku et al. does not teach specifically the temperature transmitter and control valve responsive and/or control loop as claimed by applicant nor the condensate source.

Although the control loop and temperature transmitter features are not specifically taught, there is a clear teaching in Opuku et al. that the quantity of and volume of steam added to the conduit are regulated to provide the maximum efficiency in heat and deaerating the froth and these are regulated and dependent in part on the temperature and quantity of air in the froth feed as well as the size and position of baffles in the conduit which effect froth flow which results in affecting mixing, deaeration and heating of the froth. Opuku et al. teach that the conduit can be fully or partially open at the top or fully enclosed with vapor exit means as illustrated in Figure 2.[Note Column 4, lines 4-13] With respect to the condensate source, this element as described by applicant is used in supplying steam to the incline heater body. To add this condensate stream as a steam supply source where steam injection means has been taught would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art because the steam has to come from some place, even though the steam supply source is not specifically taught

Art Unit: 1764

steam injection means has been fully and specifically taught and supported by Opuku to add a condensate line which as the supply for steam into the incline body heater would have been obvious. With respect to the control loop and temperature transmitter etc. these types of controls would have been implicitly provided as explained in Column 4, line 3 of Opuku as Opuku teaches controlling the steam, quantity and volume and controlling the temperature of the steam in the system as well as improving the overall heat efficiency, mixing of the system and realizing that these are all inter-related process optimizations and to include control valving and control temperature sensing and detecting devices to controll the efficiency of heating, and mixing of the bitumen froth with steam has been taught and suggested in Opuku and to specifically add a control loop and temperature transmitters to effect control of the system as claimed would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hann teaches a process and appartus for heating anddearing raw bituminous froth. Mitchell teach a process and apparatus for recoving bitumen from tar sands. Smith et al. teach a tar sands conditioning vessel. Bichard et al. teach integrated process for effectively recovering oil from tar sands. Duyvesteyn et al. teach extraction of bitume from bitumen fron generated from tar sands.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to N. Bhat whose telephone number is 571-272-1397. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:30AM-6:00PM.

Art Unit: 1764

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Caldarola can be reached on 571-272-1444. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



N. Bhat
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1764